

organisational) on the part of the socio-economic system. Further, in such a process, imported technologies are not significantly adapted, modified and integrated into a system of domestic technological activity. Imported technology thus largely substitutes for local technological development rather than largely supporting or complementing it. The process is admittedly complex and, if mathematically modelled, one may have to use the techniques of system dynamics and control theory.

Mani's econometric analysis falls into the familiar dilemma of causality vs coincidence. Further, R and D activity should have been disaggregated to understand the structure and extent of demand for it. In the past, foreign collaborations were approved by the concerned committee. Ministry if, among other requirements, complementary investments in R and D existed and/or were planned. Indeed, this was an important criterion for approval. But what passed off as R and D activity was another matter; ingenious methods were devised to pass off even quality control or process control activity as R and

D, besides other administrative and marketing expenses. Of course, public enterprise have been less adept at such 'innovations' in financial and cost accounting.

The criticisms made here should not however detract from the merits of the book. The author, an economist, has done what few in his profession would have dared to do; besides economic analysis, he has delved a little into engineering aspects and into the history of technology in Indian public enterprises and thereby provided us with some useful insights. This reviewer is however reminded of Michal Kalecki's pungent aside on Dobb-Sen's 'dressings' in the choice of technique solutions: "Just as economists have a weakness for calculation, technicians want to have the latest technical toys, and we should not hold this against them, but we do not need to offer them these toys immediately". Parts of the book under review have been published in *EPW* in earlier versions. The *EPW* is of course one journal where economists working in the tradition of Kalecki do find an abundance of practical analysis.

parallels economic background of the family. Especially the data pertaining to working class parents validate this conclusion most clearly, but Dairy insists on the possibility that many working class parents decide to withdraw their child from school on the basis of their short-term view and sometimes on the basis of their 'jaded' perception of selection processes. If Drury wanted to establish the validity of the working class parents' perception of selection processes, he should have studied selection processes in a few settings rather than assume that these processes are by and large fair, and that only the poor have a jaded perception of these processes.

As ethnographies go, this study too has far more writing than it can logically accommodate. A lot of trivial details are reported with earnestness along with important and interesting information, usually without any warning. Chapter 5, which describes the home environment of the middle class, is quite outstanding in this regard, offering at least to the Indian reader just about nothing that might be called even vaguely new or unfamiliar. Perhaps we must put this kind of thing under the heading foreigners writing about India, perhaps with a foreign audience in mind. For the Indian reader, Dairy's book has rather few absorbing patches. One comes in Chapter 6 where he describes the tactics applied by middle class parents to get a seat for their children in convents and other private schools. In this brief section, the author lays bare the real world of private school management and the pathetic sociodrama it routinely stages as the players scurry around to meet their petty ends behind a thin veneer of procedures. It is some measure of the author's judgment that after this brilliant though brief expose, he should start the following section with this motherhood statement: "India, like most countries, capitalist and socialist, has not succeeded in eliminating the competitive advantages and disadvantages in education associated with a student's social class." One expected that someone would have spotted a sentence like that one in a book belonging to a prestigious series edited by M N Srinivas.

Dairy's advice is that the family be given greater attention in government policy. That can hardly be faulted, but the book offers a rather weak rationale for it. Family is important inasmuch as it socialises the child into role perceptions before the school starts to differentiate children in terms of the roles they might actually be allotted in later life. Families are important loci for studying the finer texture of socialisation which has a bearing on children's transition to school and to a certain extent their fate while they are there, coping with its demands. Drury's book draws attention to the family and the promise inherent in studying it. One curiosity it does not satisfy at all is why its title focuses on the headmaster rather than on the family.

Importance of the Family

Krishna Kumar

The Iron School Master by David Drury; Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1993; pp 196.

HAD David Dairy's findings demonstrated what he had set out to demonstrate, functionalist sociology of education would have scored a point. Drury wanted to prove that the family is the locus of educational decisions, that the demand for education is mediated by the family. His own formulation of the question guiding his enquiry is; 'Why is it that some parents are not making use of educational facilities even when they are free and nearby, while other families appear to insist on higher education regardless of the costs and risks involved?' Such a formulation clearly assumes that parents have a choice - about how much education their children should avail, and in what kind of school they should avail it. Perceptions, goals, information, logic, resources and social relations - these are the 'determinants of demand' as Dairy calls the ingredients that might shape a family's decisions regarding children's education. As we can see, the list juxtaposes behavioural attributes with material constraints. Including both categories of factors would pose no problem; what the study does is to treat them as if no distinction needs to be made between them as it proceeds to present an ethnography of 123 families of Kanpur in the early 1980s. These families range from business and middle class occupations to the working and disadvantaged classes,

Drury starts by making a theoretical distinction which strikes me as rather too

limited. He recognises two sets of theories, one set anchored in the economic investment model, and the other rooted in the idea of social reproduction. This simple classification does not adequately cover the theoretical perspectives available for the analysis of education, especially in the context of institutions other than schools such as the family. For instance, the classification misses out the mainstream liberal theory of opportunity distribution in an inequal social order. Nor does it acknowledge the insights Parsons turned into a classical formulation of the socialising effects of schooling, which we might say act as an endemic residual force on the adult behaviour of every succeeding generation. By supposedly lumping all liberal theoretical perspectives into the economic investment model Drury throws away what tools educational theory could have provided him with for making sense of Kanpur. The situation becomes somewhat tragic when we learn that he is highly suspicious of the other category of models which he lumps under reproduction theory.

Apparently, there is a mindset which stops the author from seeing what his data show quite clearly - that material and cultural advantage dictate who would receive what education, that the family has little freedom to decide children's educational future. This conclusion stares at the reader out of Table 29 which shows how the choice of school